

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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HINCHEY'S REQUESTS FOR NEW YORK PROJECTS INCLUDED IN INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS BILL

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today announced that the Interior Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2003 contains important funding for New York, including money for the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area and the New York City Watershed in excess of the amounts requested by President Bush. The bill was passed this week by the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, of which Hinchey is the only New York member.

"The bill our subcommittee passed this week is far better than the budget President Bush requested for the Interior Department," said Hinchey. "I was particularly pleased to get funding for projects in the Hudson Valley and Catskill regions."

The bill includes several earmarks requested by Hinchey, including \$1 million for the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area and \$1.5 million for the protection of and economic development in the New York City Watershed.

Hinchey also succeeded in including \$500,000 for the establishment of a Northeast Urban Biodiversity Node to be located at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory in Palisades, New York. The node is needed in the Northeast to focus on issues of concern to the region, such as urban ecology; the distribution and movement of disease-causing agents including radiation; pesticides and pathogens in water, air and soil; the cause and effect of invasive species and the links between urban areas and environmental change.

Working with U.S. Representative Jose Serrano (NY-16), Hinchey also worked to include in the bill a continuation of the Living Memorials Project. This initiative, which was begun by the U.S. Forest Service in response to the tragic loss of life that took place on September 11, provides grants and technical assistance for the development of memorial tree-planting projects.

Also at Hinchey's urging, the bill provides \$1 million for research into increasing the efficiency of oil heat. The bill provides \$1.9 billion for energy programs in general, an increase of \$116 million above 2002 levels and \$165 million more than the White House requested. Overall, the bill appropriates \$800 million more than the amount the administration requested. Hinchey lauded the bill for restoring most of the cuts the president proposed for energy conservation research and research on improving fossil fuel technologies.

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"The president's budget proposal was entirely inadequate," Hinchey added. "While I am disappointed this budget does not provide more funding for energy research and does not increase the budget for the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, it's certainly an improvement over the president's plan."

The Interior and Related Agencies Subcommittee is one of thirteen subcommittees of the House Appropriations Committee, each of which is responsible for determining a portion of federal discretionary spending. Now that it has passed the subcommittee, the Interior spending bill will next be considered by the entire Appropriations Committee, which is expected to vote after the Independence Day recess.